

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AF-08 IO-13

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /106 W

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P R 150723Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9465

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7360

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, IN, AR, IT, MX, GY

SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMACY

BEGIN SUMMARY: AGAINST BACKGROUND OF KIM IL-SONG'S NOT APPEARING FOR 17 DAYS, MOFA OFFICIAL SPECULATED HE MAY HAVE BEEN ILL AND PRESENTED OTHER BITS OF INFORMATION SHOWING ANOMALIES IN DPRK DIPLOMACY. END SUMMARY.

1. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, KIM CHAE-YONG, DIRECTOR, SECOND INFORMATION DIVISION, MOFA, SAID THAT JAPANESE FONOFF HAD TOLD ROK THAT CERTAIN COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS IN TOKYO RECEIVED REPORTS FROM PYONGYANG THAT KIM IL-SONG WAS ILL. AS EVIDENCE OF THIS, KIM POINTED OUT THAT KIM IL-SONG HAD NOT APPEARED IN PYONGYANG BETWEEN AUGUST 24 AND SEPTEMBER 9 (KCNA SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED THAT KIM HAD APPEARED AT PRC EMBASSY ON SEPTEMBER 10.) DIRECTOR KIM SAID THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAD CONVINCED JAPANESE THAT THEY MUST SPEND MORE TIME ANALYZING
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EVENTS IN NORTH KOREA (NK).

2. KIM MENTIONED RECENT CUTS IN SIZE OF TWO DPRK EMBASSIES: IN INDIA AND ARGENTINA. IN INDIA, STAFF AT EMBASSY HAD BEEN CUT FROM ABOUT 30 TO ONLY ELEVEN, AND NUMBER OF CARS FROM 15 TO FIVE. IN ADDITION, PAYMENT OF RENT HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO FALL INTO ARREARS. IN ARGENTINA, STAFF HAS BEEN CUT FROM 15 TO FOUR, TWO OF WHOM ARE A COMMUNICATOR AND A DRIVER. AMBASSADOR AND HIS FAMILY WERE PACKED HOME SOME TIME AGO. IN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH MOFA WEST EUROPE DIVISION I CHIEF CHONG KYONG-IL, EMBOFF WAS TOLD THAT NORTH KOREANS HAD CALLED OFF SIGNING OF TRADE AGREEMENT WITH ITALY FOR WHICH THEY HAD BEEN PUSHING OVER PAST SEVERAL YEARS. SIGNING WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN MOSCOW IN EARLY SEPTEMBER ACCORDING TO CHONG. CHONG ALSO SAID NORTH KOREANS HAD NOT PAID LARGE BILL OWED TO AIR INDIA FOR AIR TRAVEL THIS YEAR, AND AIR INDIA IS PRESSING THEM FOR PAYMENT.

3. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION SEPTEMBER 14, KIM ADDED THAT SOME NK EMBASSIES WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY CANCELLED NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 9 HAVE NOW RESCHEDULED THEM FOR SEPTEMBER 13. SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSIES IN NEPAL AND PAKISTAN HAVE EACH REPORTED THIS DEVELOPMENT, LEADING KIM TO ATTRIBUTE THIS ACTION TO INSTRUCTIONS FROM PYONGYANG AND TO ANTICIPATE SIMILARLY RESCHEDULED CELEBRATIONS ELSEWHERE.

4. KIM ALSO SAID THAT NK IS AGAIN BEGINNING TO SEND DELEGATIONS ABROAD. AS EXAMPLE, HE CITED NK DELEGATION GOING TO MEXICO TO ATTEND OPENING CEREMONIES OF "CENTER OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES OF THE THIRD WORLD" (APPROXIMATE NAME). KIM MENTIONED THAT GUYANA WAS ALSO OBJECT OF SPECIAL DIPLOMATIC EFFORT BY NK.

5. WHILE THE EXAMPLES CITED ARE CONSONANT WITH INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES AND KIM'S INTERPRETATIONS HAVE BEEN VOICED BY OTHER ROK ANALYSTS, THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE INFORMATION ARE NOT PROVABLE.
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